

Darley National School

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the school principal in consultation with a PPDS Adviser, all staff members, the members of the Board of Management, the senior students, the Parents Association and the entire parent body. It was devised during the first and second terms of the 2008/2009 school year and audited on 18th March 2010 by all stakeholders. The policy was reviewed during the 2020 school year and amended by the Board of Management in September 2021.

Rationale

1. The Board of Management of Darley National School decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
2. It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23(1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:
 - a. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - b. The measure that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 - c. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - d. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
 - e. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

Darley NS seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The policy shall apply to all students during **all** school related activities.

Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be:

- 1 To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement;
- 2 To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline;
- 3 To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- 4 To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- 5 To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- 6 To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- 7 To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the

consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and their property.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from all the school community.

Pupil's Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Work quietly, safely and to the best of their ability at all times
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Listen to other pupils and await their turn to speak
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect the right of other pupils to learn
- Care for their own property
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving any way which would endanger others
- Remain seated at all times, if their teacher is not in the room
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing or name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Move quietly around the school
- Keep the school clean and tidy
- Bring the correct materials and books to school
- Stay on school premises and within designated areas during school times
- Follow school and class rules

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour
- Be cognisant of their duty of care
- Create a safe, welcoming environment for each pupil
- Develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- Praise desirable behaviour
- Facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour

- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary
- Provide reports on matters of concern

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property and that of others
- Ensure that children attend regularly, punctually and in full uniform
- Send a healthy lunch in line with healthy lunch policy
- Ensure that children attend in a clean and hygienic manner
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work and homework and sign homework diary daily.
- Ensure that their children have the correct books and other materials
- Be familiar with and support the Code of Behaviour and other school policies
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate to the school, problems which may affect a child's behaviour
- Make an appointment to meet with class teacher/principal to discuss areas of concern.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

To facilitate new members of staff become familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers' documents. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

The following strategies will be used by all teachers:

Praise:

- 1 A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- 2 A comment in a child's exercise book;

- 3 A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- 4 A work or praise in front of a group or the class;
- 5 A reward system - occasional treats
- 6 Special mention at assembly;
- 7 Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- 8 A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication;
- 9 End of year awards ceremony.

Disapproval

The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed. The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

- 1 Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- 2 Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- 3 Temporary removal from the group (within the class); If constant misbehaviour continues, removal from classroom to another classroom for a period of time (depending on the age of the child).
- 4 Time out (age appropriate including advising the child about reflecting on their behaviour) during yard time.
- 5 Prescribing extra work;
- 6 Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher); Child writes what they did, how can they amend their behaviour
- 7 Carrying out a useful task within the school e.g. tidying the library, shelves, sorting games
- 8 Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal (3 records)
- 9 Detention during breaks, supervised by a teacher;
- 10 Verbal/written communication with parents/guardians;
- 11 Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;
- 12 Meeting with parents/guardians;
- 13 Suspension
- 14 Expulsion.

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teacher will

actively promote good behaviour and aim to 'catch' repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE and other agencies).

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent, it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories - minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Note: Not living up to the expected standards of behaviour or breaking the school rules constitutes misbehaviour

*See Appendix 1 for list of School Rules.

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Interrupting class work
- Regularly arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Minor infringement of the school rules
- Talking out of turn
- Answering back teacher
- Not working to full potential
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Not wearing appropriate uniform
- This list is not exhaustive

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

1. Verbal reprimand/reasoning with the pupil
2. Intervention sheets
3. Time out

4. Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent
5. Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom)
6. Carrying out a useful task within the school.

Serious Misbehaviour - continuous minor misbehaviours automatically become serious misbehaviours.

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Telling lies
- Name calling
- Stealing
- Persistently not working to full potential
- Damaging others' property
- Using unacceptable language
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Constantly disruptive in class
- Continuously not completing homework
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Spitting
- All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying Policy (See separate policy)
- This list is not exhaustive

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour:

1. Child will be sent to another class if the serious misbehaviour pertains to the child's classroom, to allow for a period of calming
2. Child will be sent to the Principal
3. An account of the incident will be entered in the relevant Behaviour Record Sheet
4. Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of misbehaviour. At this point Behaviour plan may be necessary
5. Class teacher or yard duty teacher **and** Principal will meet with one/both parents
6. Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and Principal.

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Parents will be invited to meet the class teacher, the Principal and/or the Chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour

- Suspension will be used as a sanction **where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.** Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing (Copies of all correspondence will be retained).

Gross Misbehaviour - continuous serious misbehaviours automatically become gross misbehaviours

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Bullying
- Deliberately endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community
- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps (fire hose) etc. turned on
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting)
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour
- Smoking
- Purposely activating school fire alarm
- Vandalism
- Assault

On line Privacy and Code of Behaviour:

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

Teacher will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

1. Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned once parents have been informed. The Board has empowered the Principal to sanction suspensions of up to three days without the necessity for an emergency meeting of the Board of Management.
2. Expulsion will be possible in an extreme case or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).
3. Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998) Under section 29 of the Act, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decision of the Board of Management, including permanent expulsion from a school and suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or more in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

Procedures in respect of Suspension (as per page 77 the NEWB Guidelines)

While the BoM has the authority to suspend, they may delegate this authority to the principal, for period of up to three days.

1. Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour
2. Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident
3. Parents will be given an opportunity to respond

If suspension is still decided upon:

The Principal notifies the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- The provision for appeal to the Board of Management
- The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days)

Note: Where the cumulative total of days reaches 6, the NEWB will be notified.

Records and Reports:

Formal written records will be kept of:

1. The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
2. The decision-making process
3. The decision and rationale for the decision
4. The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

Expulsion (as per page 82 of the NEWB Guidelines)

Procedures in respect of expulsion

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
 - a. Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
 - b. Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made
2. A recommendation to the BoM by the Principal (see page 84 NEWB guidelines)
3. Consideration by the BoM of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing (see page 84 NEWB guidelines)
4. BoM deliberations and actions following the hearing (page 85 NEWB Guidelines)
5. If BoM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion.

The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB should be notified using a Notice of Intention to Expel form which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie or from our helpline (1890 36 3666). This form should be completed and sent to School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16 - 22 Green Street, Dublin 7.

- Consultations arranged by the EWO
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Misbehaviour on the Yard

Incidents of yard misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

The Teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil(s) misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following procedure may be followed:

- a. Ask the pupil(s) misbehaving to accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard
- b. Impose a period of 'reflection time' - 5 to 10 minutes - where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play

- c. Ask the student to go into the school and complete some work
- d. Inform the class teacher who will decide on the method of discipline
- e. 3 time outs where the student will be removed from the yard for the full break time and parents will be informed.

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In case where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. **Please refer to attached complaints procedure.** Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal meeting at the school. Class teachers, or teacher who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty, may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate. Where a child has been suspended and prior to returning to school, the parents and the child will be required to attend a meeting at the school to discuss:

- Reason for suspension
- Seriousness of the misbehaviour
- Seriousness of the sanction
- How to move forward promoting positive behaviour and
- Enter into a contract to uphold the school's Code of Behaviour

Appeals

Under Section 29 Of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer if any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days

from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See circular 22/02).

Keeping Records

In line with the school's policy on recording keeping and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure area. Records of more serious incidents are recorded and are retained until students reach 21 years. Copies of all communication with parents/guardians will be retained in the school.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 20 days.

Reference to other Policies

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

1. SPHE plan
2. Anti-bullying
3. Harassment
4. Enrolment
5. Record keeping
6. Health and Safety
7. Equality
8. Special Educational Needs
9. Child Protection

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Ratification

The Board of Management have reviewed and examined all aspects of this Policy and agree that the policy should be ratified as a school policy.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Appendix 1

School Rules

Safety

For my own safety and the safety of others:

1. I should always walk while in the school building
2. I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher
3. No earrings are permitted to be worn in school
4. No personal toys are to be brought to school, unless for curricular purposes
5. Pupils may not have their mobile phone in school. Phones will be confiscated by the class teacher and held until collection by the parent(s).
6. No money should be brought to school unless needed for a specific school requirement.

Caring for Myself

- I should always try to bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum, fizzy drinks and crisps are strictly forbidden.
- I should be in school by 9.20a.m. each day.
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working to my potential and completing my homework.

Caring for Others

- I should be truthful and honest at all times.
- I should be kind and respectful to teacher, other school staff, fellow pupils and visitors
- I should show respect for the property of the teachers and pupils.

Bullying: Refer to the School's Anti-Bullying Policy

I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens, I should tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

Hair styles

Extreme hair styles affect the image of students and of the school and are, therefore, forbidden. The style of the hair should not be extreme including but not limited to mohawk, shaved styles and/or patterns, hair braided with another colour, etc. The colour must be a natural colour for a student to have and cannot have dyed or highlighted sections. Students infringing this rule by having an extreme hairstyle or an unnatural colour will be instructed to correct the matter by the next school day.

Complaints

The Board of Management of the Darley National School has adopted the INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure which provides a mechanism for dealing fairly with parental complaints against a teacher.

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- On matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education
- Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school
- Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher he/she should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.
3. If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required

- a. Supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint *and*
- b. Arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint.

Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

1. If the complaint is still not resolved, the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in stage 3 above.
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - a. The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage
 - b. The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint
 - c. The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint
 - d. The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting
 - e. The Board of Management may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting
 - f. The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

Stage 5

1. When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

2. The decision of the Board shall be final.

In this policy 'days' means 'school days'.

Important Note: Revised procedures for processing complaints by parents will be prescribed for all schools under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. At present these have not been prescribed and therefore these procedures are the only agreed procedures.

Appendix 2

Online Privacy and Code of Behaviour

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action, the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions warrant such sanctions.